



**Global Education
Cooperation Mechanism**

#LeadingSDG4

SDG4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee
Sherpa and Leaders Group
Terms of Reference

Agreed on 16-17 May 2022
Room X, UNESCO Headquarters
Paris, France

HLSC Sherpa Group Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The strengthened Global Education Cooperation Mechanism, adopted at the 2021 Global Education Meetings, puts forward a reformed SDG 4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC) as the global education apex body.

In line with the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the HLSC will provide strategic guidance, review progress, and make recommendations on thematic focus areas and actions; monitor and advocate for adequate financing; and encourage harmonisation and coordination of partner activities.

Its membership is representative of the global education community, with a 'Leaders Group' of twenty-eight (28) Ministers, Heads of Agency, and organisational leaders, and a corresponding 'Sherpa Group' of senior technical representatives. The latter will provide strategic support to the Leaders Group and will lead the technical work on the three HLSC's Functional Areas, with support of and coordination by with the Inter-Agency Secretariat (IAS).

2. Responsibilities

The Sherpa Group will not be a formal decision-making body in its own capacity since this responsibility is reserved for the Leaders Group. However, it will work proactively and with a high degree of initiative in identifying opportunities, developing initiatives, brokering agreements, and shaping decisions for the Leaders Group.

The Sherpa Group will have the following main responsibilities:

Advisory support to HLSC members

- Identify opportunities for effective actions and impact by the Leaders Group.
- Provide input and help shape the agendas of HLSC Leaders meetings.
- Prepare respective HLSC members for upcoming HLSC meetings.
- Act as designated representatives of the HLSC members.

Coordination of stakeholder engagement

- Establish and foster networks within and across HLSC constituencies.
- Carry out regular and structured consultations among respective HLSC constituencies (especially ahead of and as a follow-up to HLSC meetings).
- Negotiate agreements within and among/across HLSC constituencies on matters relevant to the HLSC's mandate and be accountable to those constituencies for representing agreed positions in the HLSC.
- Troubleshoot obstacles for better coordination, aggregation, monitoring, and exchange among global education stakeholders.

Coordination of the HLSC's functional and thematic areas

- Co-chair technical committees on the HLSC's three Functional Areas (1) evidence-based policy, 2) progress monitoring, and 3) effective financing), and validate progress and results
- Convene technical committees and/or ad hoc working groups in line with the HLSC's agenda and deliverables

- Develop proposals and recommendations for time-bound initiatives relating to the HLSC’s thematic focus areas, foster partnerships across HLSC constituencies, and oversee progress and results

Facilitation of special projects and initiatives

- Lead and facilitate special projects/initiatives assigned by the Co-Chairs or Leaders Group (e.g., planning and preparation of the UN Secretary-General’s Transforming Education Summit in September 2022).

3. HLSC Sherpa Group membership and working arrangements

The HLSC Sherpa Group is composed of twenty-eight (28) members at the senior technical level, matching the institutional composition of the HLSC Leaders Group. It is co-led by a Member State Co-Chair (at the ministerial level) and by the Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO. The Member State Co-Chair is nominated every two years in line with the overall change of membership of HLSC members.

All nominated members of the HLSC, at both the Leaders and Sherpa Group levels, have committed to ensuring effective consultation with other members of the constituencies that they represent on the HLSC. Members of the Sherpa Group will have a particular responsibility to consult actively with their relevant constituencies ahead of HLSC meetings and to provide feedback following those meetings.

The Sherpa Group convenes at least quarterly, and more frequently as required.

4. The Sherpa Group and the Inter-Agency Secretariat

The HLSC Sherpa Group’s work in advancing the HLSC agenda is reinforced through the Inter-Agency Secretariat (IAS), both supporting the Leaders Group’s mandate and decision-making, driving progress by the technical committees’, and actively engaging a broad set of stakeholders. The IAS serves as Secretariat for both the Leadership Group and the Sherpa Group.

The main role of the Sherpa Group is to provide strategic guidance, leadership of the HLSC agenda and the technical committees’ deliverables, and alignment among the HLSC constituencies. The IAS will support the Sherpa Group in drafting and managing the HLSC’s agenda, coordinating and engaging HLSC stakeholders, and driving the achievement of HLSC deliverables.

HLSC Leaders Group Terms of Reference

1. Purpose and scope

The strengthened Global Education Cooperation Mechanism (GCM) adopted at the 2021 Global Education Meetings (GEM) puts forward a reformed SDG 4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC) as the global education apex body.

In line with the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the HLSC will provide strategic guidance, review progress, and make recommendations on thematic focus areas and actions; monitor and advocate for adequate financing; and encourage harmonisation and coordination of partner activities.

The HLSC membership is representative of the global education community, with a 'Leaders Group' of twenty-eight Ministers and Heads of Agency (or equivalent), and a corresponding 'Sherpa Group' of senior technical representatives. The Sherpa Group will provide strategic support to the Leaders Group and will lead technical work on the HLSC's three Functional Areas¹, supported by the Inter-Agency Secretariat (IAS).

2. Responsibilities

The Leaders Group is established and mandated as a decision-making body, on behalf of the global education community. It has the following main responsibilities:

Agenda setting

- Decide on strategic and thematic focus areas for enhanced global engagement.
- Decide on catalytic actions in support of agreed thematic focus areas.

Progress monitoring

- Examine and endorse periodic reports on implementation of agreed focus areas and catalytic actions.
- Request actions by HLSC constituencies to improve SDG 4 monitoring, based on Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) recommendations.
- Examine and endorse an annual report on monitoring progress against national benchmarks.
- Propose focus areas for the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) for development of an SDG4 monitoring framework and endorse outputs.
- Examine progress reports by other GCM bodies (e.g., Multilateral Education Platform, Global Education Forum, CCNGO, SDG4Youth).

Effective financing

- Make recommendations about increased and improved education financing to address agreed focus areas and catalytic actions.
- Examine and endorse progress reports against GEM commitments (e.g., 2021 GEM Paris Declaration).

External representation

- Liaise with other global leaders and key forums (e.g., UN Secretary General, UNGA, UN HLPF, G7, G20, IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings, World Economic Forum) on advancement of the HLSC agenda.
- Show leadership and represent the GCM for special projects and initiatives, such as the Secretary General's Transforming Education Summit.

¹ Those functions are: (i) promote evidence-based policy formulation and implementation, (ii) monitor progress and improve the availability/use of data, and (iii) drive financing mobilisation and improved alignment.

- Advocate for education and share and amplify the GCM's/HLSC's positioning and key messages

3. Membership and working arrangements

The Leadership Group comprises twenty-eight (28) members at the senior political level or equivalent. Representation is at the ministerial, Head of Agency, or top organisational level. See Annex A for a full list of the twenty-eight fixed constituency/organisational seats on the Leadership Group.

Each member will be responsible for representing the interests of a constituency comprising entities/organisations of a similar nature (e.g., Member States, regional inter-governmental organisations, multilateral organisations). Except for the fixed organisational seats, the membership of the Leaders Group will change every two years. Constituencies will operate on a “self-governing” principle regarding nominations to the Leaders Group.

The Leaders Group will be Co-Chaired by a Head of State and by the Director-General of UNESCO. The Head of State Co-Chair is nominated every two years, in line with the overall change of membership of HLSC members.

The Leaders Group will convene once annually, unless the Co-Chairs request an extraordinary meeting.

The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Global Education and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth have standing invitations to attend Leaders Group meetings.

4. Relationship with other multi-stakeholder forums

Other notable multi-stakeholder forums within the GCM are the Multilateral Education Platform (MEP), the Global Education Forum (GEF), the CCNGO, and the SDG4Youth Network. The HLSC Leaders Group will maintain close relationships with the aforementioned forums, notably through the Sherpa Group and the Inter-Agency Secretariat (IAS).

5. Supporting structures and arrangements

The HLSC Leaders Group is supported by the Sherpa Group and the Inter-Agency Secretariat (IAS), who work closely together, with the shared objectives to advance the HLSC's agenda, to support the Leaders Group in its mandate and decision-making, to drive progress through designated technical committees, and to ensure proactive and systematic consultation within and across the HLSC constituencies. The IAS serves as Secretariat for both the Leaders and the Sherpa Group.